

SENATOR RICHARD YOUNG



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Dear Friends:

As we start a new year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect back on events throughout 2003. For many Hoosiers, this was a trying year.

We lost our beloved governor, Frank O'Bannon, to a stroke. I had the honor of succeeding Frank as the State Senator representing the 47th District when he was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1988. During his lifetime, he gave so much to the citizens of Indiana, both as an elected official and as a Hoosier. We will greatly miss him.

This past year also proved to be a challenging year for our economy. Indiana, like other Midwest states, lost thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs. Furthermore, the Midwest is struggling to recover from the current recession that has deeply cut into state revenues. Despite numerous spending cuts, state government still faces a deficit in the neighborhood of \$800 million.

On the positive side, this year Indiana launched the largest economic development campaign in state history referred to as "Energize Indiana." This campaign is aimed at creating new, good-paying jobs in all geographical areas of the state. Since the campaign was launched, state officials report an increase in the number of firms expressing interest in locating or expanding in Indiana.

We have also made great strides in education. Enrollment in the Community College of Indiana program continues to make steady gains. Indiana this year adopted academic standards among the highest in the nation for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. At the same time, our high school dropout rate continues to decline.

As I write this, legislators have been meeting in Indianapolis to address some of the problems brought on by the recent reassessment. I am confident we can successfully address these issues and others facing our state as members of the Indiana General Assembly continue to work in a cooperative, bipartisan fashion.

Wishing you a healthy and happy new year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard D. Young, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

**REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 47
INCLUDING CRAWFORD, DUBOIS, HARRISON, PERRY,
SPENCER, WARRICK, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**

2004 legislative session underway

General Assembly addresses property taxes

Every November, all 150 legislators gather at the State House in Indianapolis for the annual Organization Day, when we make final preparations for the session to follow in January. This year, however, we will immediately begin considering legislation to deal with property tax relief and the ongoing property tax reassessment.

Ideas to be considered range from providing additional targeted property tax relief to the elderly and working families to tighter restrictions on local government spending. Some of these proposals may require lengthy consideration, but I am confident we will accomplish important goals prior to the scheduled start of the 2004 session in January.

Chief among these goals is the extension of the filing deadline for the Homestead Credit and numerous property tax deductions. I sup-

port legislation which would retroactively extend the original May 10th deadline to December 10th as suggested by Governor Joe Kernan thus allowing many taxpayers to take advantage of these important tax relief programs.

Some suggestions regarding legislation to place new limits on local spending should also be considered and would certainly help control property tax growth in the future. I support many of these initiatives, but I also remain committed to an even bolder vision.

Indiana needs a tax system where the burden does not fall so heavily on working families, seniors and farming communities. This means decreasing the overall reliance on property taxes and making other taxes less regressive. We have made progress, but there is much more work to be done.

Workforce training

Indiana's WorkOne Centers offer a one-stop shop for Hoosier employees and employers. Established through Indiana's Department of Workforce Development, there are 27 WorkOne Centers throughout the state offering an array of services, including:

- ♦ Job counseling and training
- ♦ Unemployment insurance
- ♦ GED training and testing
- ♦ Veterans employment and training services

Employers and employees can also access CS3, Indiana's computer job-matching system, at any WorkOne Center or online at <https://cs3.dwd.state.in.us>.

For more information about Indiana's workforce development programs or to find the WorkOne Center nearest you, please contact the Department of Workforce Development at 1-888-967-5663 or online at www.in.gov/dwd.

LOOKING FOR LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION?

Visit the Indiana General Assembly's website at

www.in.gov/legislative

Now available online:

- ♦ House and Senate session meeting times
- ♦ Committee hearing dates
- ♦ General bill information

You may also contact the Office of Legislative Information by calling 317-232-9856.

In Memory of Governor Frank O'Bannon

On September 13, Indiana lost a devoted leader when Governor Frank O'Bannon passed away. O'Bannon was a dedicated public servant who was wholly committed to improving the lives of all Hoosiers, especially children. Throughout his 30 year career in public service, O'Bannon was considered compassionate, kind and loyal. He was best known as a consensus-builder who had a talent for bringing opposing groups together in seeking resolutions.

O'Bannon was a great governor who will be sorely missed. May his spirit of public service and legacy live on in the hearts and minds of all Hoosiers for generations to come.



Governor Frank O'Bannon
1930—2003

Economic development efforts targeted

During the past several years, the General Assembly has made tremendous strides to provide a positive atmosphere for economic development in Indiana. In 2002, legislators worked together to enact the most comprehensive tax restructuring package in state history that, among other things, significantly overhauled corporate taxation in Indiana.

Attracting New Business

Funded by a legislative appropriation from the 2003 General Assembly, Governor Kernan launched an ambitious campaign to promote Indiana as the place to do business thanks to the recently restructured tax system. In October, the Governor and the Indiana Department of Commerce announced a bold initiative to market Indiana's business-friendly climate to regional and national audiences through statewide daily newspapers and business journals, as well as in the regional editions of national business publications and those focusing in major Midwestern cities.

The campaign logo, which features the word "GO" placed on what normally is considered a traffic stop sign, is designed to indicate that Indiana is moving forward in

the face of a national recession.

Technology Partnerships

Legislators also approved legislation that created or revised economic development tools to encourage new jobs for working Hoosiers. One of the new tools being implemented is the "Certified Technology Park Program." This program creates partnerships between universities and local governments to encourage the location of high-tech businesses within areas identified by local redevelopment commissions and approved as Technology Parks. Each park must have a firm commitment from at least one business primarily engaged in high-tech activity that will locate within the park and create a significant number of jobs.

These programs are needed to promote our commitment to education, retain Hoosier graduates and boost the high-tech sector which ultimately creates jobs.



Technology Park Locations in Indiana:
Anderson, Fort Wayne, Hammond,
West Lafayette, and Shelbyville.

The No Child Left Behind Act and Educational Improvement

Indiana schools are improving. The changes initiated by Public Law 221 passed in 1999 have resulted in tougher academic standards, higher test scores and a comprehensive community focus on how to improve neighborhood schools.

Thirty-nine schools successfully moved off the "needs improvement list" in 2003. Ninety-six percent of Indiana's public classes are taught by highly qualified teachers, ranking Indiana fourth best in the nation. Recognizing the need for continued progress, last session Indiana lawmakers increased education funding by 3.3% in 2004 and 2.9% in 2005 despite difficult economic times.

Indiana has made educational improvement a priority.

Indiana has made educational improvement a priority. However, a cloud hangs over these advancements—the threat of losing essential federal funding and the implementation of counter-productive sanctions if schools do not improve fast enough to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) signed into law in January 2002 by President Bush.

NCLB's ultimate goal is to have every student in the United States passing state reading, math and science tests by the year 2014. I fully support these goals and believe closing the achievement gap is of the utmost importance. However, federal funding has been appropriated at almost \$10 billion below the level originally promised.

The cost of new tests, new classrooms, more qualified teachers and extra tutoring and transportation is estimated to exceed any additional federal dollars directed to Indiana. Additionally, if our schools fail to meet educational requirements, then these schools could be subject to costly sanctions.

Fortunately, Indiana has been successful in meeting NCLB standards of improvement thus far. However, Indiana schools will need adequate funding in order to continue to achieve the required progress.

Federal funding for NCLB has fallen below the level originally promised.



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Learning opportunities at the Indiana State Capitol

Be a Page

Students ages 12-18 may apply to serve as Senate Pages while the Indiana General Assembly is in session. Students serve for one day assisting with various legislative activities. Participation in the page program is considered an excused absence from school.

Interested students should write to their State Senator in care of the Indiana State Senate, 200 West Washington, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2785; include their full name, address, phone number, age, school; and two different dates they are available. Opportunities to page begin January 5 and continue through March 14. Contact me early as there are a limited number of positions available. For more information, contact Senate Student Services directly at 317-232-9410 or toll-free at 800-382-9467.

Visit the State House

Tours of the State House are available to individuals and groups who visit Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Tours may be arranged by calling the State Capitol Tour Office at 317-233-5293. Walk-in visitors can pick up a self-guided tour book at the State House Information Desk located outside the rotunda in the north wing.